

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANJUL
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AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13673

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, MRS. LILLIAN)
SUBJ: MRS. LILLIAN CARTER'S MEETING WITH HIS HOLINESS POPE
PAUL VI

FROM VATICAN OFFICE

1. MRS. LILLIAN CATER WAS RECEIVED FOR A 25-MINUTE PRIVATE AUDIENCE BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI ON SUNDAY, JULY 23. THE AUDIENCE WAS HELD AT THE POPE'S PALACE IN CASTEL GANDOLFO WHERE HE NORMALLY RESIDES FROM MID-JULY THROUGH MID-SEPTEMBER. MISS LILLIAN REPORTED TO US THAT THE AUDIENCE WAS CORDIAL THROUGH-OUT AND THAT THROUGH THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THE POPE AND ALSO THROUGH HER CONVERSATION SHE EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF HER TRIP TO THE SAHEL AND RECEIVED THE POPE'S WARM ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT.

2 UPON DEPARTURE FROM THE AIRPORT MISS LILLIAN, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ABOUT THE AUDIENCE, REPLIED, "I JUST THOUGHT HE WAS THE NICEST, SWEETEST MAN AND I FEEL SO HOLY. HE MADE ME FEEL SO AT HOME AND ANTHING I WANTED BLESSED HE BLESSED IT FOR ME.
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HE GAVE ME WORDS OF ADVICE TO TAKE HOME FOR MY SON. MY SON IN TURN SENT HIM SOME ADVISE. IT WAS THE MOST DEVOUT MOMENT I'VE EVER SPENT, EVEN IN MY OWN CHURCH."

3. THE VATICAN ITSELF -- AS IS NORMALLY ITS PRACTICE -- DID NOT MAKE A STATEMENT REGARDING THE AUDIENCE BUT THE VATICAN ORGAN, L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO, ON JULY 26 PUBLISHED A PHOTO OF

MISS LILLIAN WITH THE POPE. (WE ARE SENDING COPY TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR RICHARD HARDEN.)

4. OUR VATICAN CONTACTS, IN POINTING OUT THE POPE'S UNUSUAL COURTESY IN GRANTING MISS LILLIAN AN AUDIENCE DURING THE FIRST FIFTEEN DAYS OF HIS SUMMER VACATION, COMMENTED THAT THE POPE WISHED IN THIS WAY TO DEMONSTRATE HIS ADMIRATION AND SUPPORT FOR MISS LILLIAN'S AND THE PRESIDENT'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE BATTLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AS WELL AS TO SHOW PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR MISS LILLIAN'S SAHEL VISIT. GARDNER

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